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Washington, Feb 7 -

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HR 4137, the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007, was passed by the House 354-58. The measure would reform and strengthen the nation's higher education programs to ensure that they operate in the best interests of students and families.

"The opportunity to attend college should never be denied to a child because their family can't afford tuition. This bill will make text book costs more manageable and make the student aid application process easier.

"By providing students with a more affordable and practical alternative to obtaining a college degree, we give them a chance to truly succeed. I am committed to ensuring that Iowa students have this opportunity and that's why I'm proud to support this bill."

The bill's new provisions also include requiring better consumer disclosures and protections on private student loans.

HR 4137 is a comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the primary federal law aimed at expanding college access for low- and middle-income students.